

Herders kill four in fresh attack on Benue community

March 5, 2020 Cephas Iorhemen



Armed herdsmen yesterday invaded Waya community in Jato-Aka area of Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State and killed four people.

Those killed were two women and two men. The victims were butchered and abandoned in a pool of blood.

Jato-Aka is the hometown of Second Republic Minister of Steel, Chief Paul Unongo.

Scores of inhabitants, including women, children and the aged, have fled the community for fear of being killed.

The killing came less than 48 hours after Force Commander of Operation Whirl-Stroke, covering Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba states, and Governor Samuel Ortom disagreed over the growing insecurity situation in the state, arising from herdsmen's attacks.

Ortom had said "OPWS are still in town and they have been doing their best but they are overstretched. They have been overwhelmed. They need more personnel and equipment because of the superior power force of the herdsmen. The advantage OPWS have is that they have capacity on land, air and sea.

"Our intention is to see all the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) go back home, but we are faced with security challenges. Up till today, there are attacks in different communities in the state."

But in a swift reaction, Major General Yekini countered the governor.

He said: "We are not overstretched or overwhelmed. No, we are not. Every military operation has a mandate and we believe we have substantially fulfilled our mandate not just in Benue but also in Nasarawa and Taraba states."

It was, however, learnt that as a result of the fresh attack and killing, all socio-economic and political activities have been grounded in the area.

The House of Representatives member representing Kwande/Ushongo Federal Constituency, Hon. Bob Tyough, confirmed the attack and killing in a statement released to the media.

He said: “As the member representing Kwande/Ushongo Federal Constituency, I can authoritatively say that my people are still being attacked on a daily basis by herdsmen. Just yesterday, four persons were killed and many others injured at Waya community in Jato-Aka, Kwande Local Government Area.”

Tyough regretted that the entire Kwande Local Government Area had only 35 police personnel, which, according to him, is grossly inadequate to guarantee the safety of lives and property of the people.

The lawmaker said he was making personal efforts to get more police personnel deployed to his constituency.

He also called for the establishment of mobile police units in the constituency to improve the security of the area.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Sewuese Anene, confirmed the attack and killing.

Anene said three persons were killed by the herders who opened fire on sighting them at the river bank.

“On 3, 3, 2020, about 10a.m., gunmen suspected to be herders, invaded Moon District, Kwande Local Government Area and shot sporadically at persons sited at the river bank.

“During investigation, one male and two female corpses were recovered,” the PPRO said.

Anene said dozens of policemen had been deployed in the area to restore peace and order while investigation was still in progress.